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MULTI-FREQUENCY TRANSMITTER USING PREDISTORTION AND A METHOD OF TRANSMITTING

The present invention relates to a transmitter and a method of transmitting and in particular, but not exclusively, for use in
10 a telecommunications network.

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In known wireless telecommunication networks 2 such as
illustrated in Figure 1, the area covered by the network 2 is
divided into a plurality of cells 4. Each cell 4 has associated
15 therewith a base transceiver station 6. Each base station 6 is
arranged to communicate with terminals located in the cell 8
associated with that base station 6. The terminals 8 may be
mobile terminals which are arranged to move between the cells 4.

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20 Each base station 6 in the GSM (Global System for Mobile
communications) is arranged to transmit N frequencies out of M
available frequencies C1....CM, as illustrated in Figure 2a. Each
of the M frequencies is different and within the bandwidth
allocated for signals transmitted by base stations. Each channel
25 is divided into a plurality of sequential frames F one of which
is shown in Figure 2b. Each frame F is divided into eight slots
S0..S7. The GSM standard is a time/frequency division multiple
access system (F/TDMA) and accordingly signals will be
transmitted by the base station to different mobile stations in
30 different time slots. In other words, the base station will
transmit signals to different mobile stations in different time
slots at the same frequency. N is usually much less than M.

35 With known base transceiver stations a separate transmitter
circuit is generally provided for each different frequency. For
illustrative purposes a known base transceiver station is shown
in Figure 3. For the purpose of clarity only the transmit part
10 of the base station 12 is shown in Figure 3.

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The transmit part 10 comprises N different transmit paths 14, one
path being provided for each frequency. For clarity only the

5 arrangement of one path 14 is shown but it should be appreciated
that each path 14 has the same structure. Each path 14 comprises
a modulator 16 which modulates the signal to be transmitted. The
modulated signal is output to an amplifier 18 which amplifies the
10 modulated signal. The output of the amplifier 18 is then filtered
by a bandpass filter 20 which removes or attenuates unwanted
noise and other emissions such as spurious signals and
intermodulation products.

15 The output of each transmit path 14 is connected to the input of
a combiner 22 which combines the signals from each path 14 to
provide a multicarrier signal. The output of the combiner 22 is
connected to an antenna 24 which transmits the multicarrier
signal containing each of the N different channels to the
terminals in the cell served by the base station.

20 It is desirable to reduce the number of transmit paths to one as
this would significantly reduce the costs involved. However, if
a single amplifier were to be used with a number of channels at
the same time, that amplifier would need to be very linear to
25 prevent the leakage of power into adjacent channels. The leakage
of power into adjacent channels is undesirable in that a
reduction in system capacity and/or a reduction in signal quality
results. Linear amplifiers are known but even these amplifiers
are not linear when operated near the peak capacity of the
30 amplifier.

Several methods have been proposed for ensuring that amplifiers
are linear. It is known, for example, from International Patent
Application No. WO 97/30521 to use predistortion in a transmitter
35 to try to ensure linearity. Predistortion is used to try to
ensure that a transmitter is linear. Amplifiers introduce non
linearity. With predistortion, a signal is distorted prior to
being input to the amplifier which causes the distortion. The
predistortion applied is the inverse of the distortion caused by
40 the amplifier. Thus the output of the amplifier will be linear
with respect to the signal prior to the application of the

5 predistortion and the passing of that signal through the amplifier. The transmitter illustrated in this document is of the type where a different transmit path is provided for each channel.

10 Reference is also made to the following papers: Linearization of Multi-Carrier Power Amplifiers by Johansson, Mattsson and Faulkner (IEEE 1993); Linearisation of RF multicarrier amplifiers using Cartesian Feedback by Johansson and Sundstrom (Electronics Letters 7 July 1994); and Linearization of Wideband RF Power Amplifiers by Johansson and Faulkner. These documents disclose a transmitter which uses Cartesian feedback to correct for the non linearity of the amplifier. A signal from the output of the power amplifier is feedback and demodulated. The demodulated signal is subtracted from the input signals to provide an error signal. The error signal is used to drive the modulator and the amplifier. The feedback is performed in the analogue domain. In these documents, a separate Cartesian feedback module is provided for each channel. It should be appreciated that Cartesian feedback is by its nature a narrow band linearization technique.

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It is an aim of embodiments of the present invention to provide a transmitter which can have only a single transmit path and which solves or at least mitigates the problems caused by a non linear amplifier.

30 According to one aspect of the present invention, there is provided a multi frequency carrier transmitter comprising input means for receiving a plurality of different digital signals to be transmitted, said different signals to be transmitted on
35 different carrier frequencies; amplifier means for receiving a composite signal comprising said different signals at the respective carrier frequencies and amplifying said composite signal; and predistortion means for predistorting said plurality of digital signals prior to amplification of the composite signal
40 by said amplification means, said predistortion provided by said predistortion means being subsequently altered in dependence on

5 the difference between said input signals and the output at said amplifier means.

Accordingly, embodiments of the present invention provide a multi carrier transmitter which is able to deal with the problems of
10 nonlinearity by using predistortion. The predistortion can be implemented more simply than the feedback method discussed in the prior art.

15 The input means are preferably arranged to separately receive each of the different signals. Combiner means are preferably provided between the input means and the amplifier means for combining said plurality of different signals to provide a composite signal. This may be the composite signal input to the amplifier means or may be a composite signal at a lower, intermediate frequency. In the latter case, that composite signal
20 at a lower frequency would be upconverted to provide the composite signal input to the amplifier means.

25 Preferably the predistortion means are arranged to individually predistort each of the different signals before the plurality of different signals are combined by said combiner. This has the advantage that it is easy to ensure that different predistortion coefficients appropriate for the respective carrier frequency are applied to each of the signals which will be at the respective
30 different carrier frequencies.

Alternatively, the predistortion means may be arranged to predistort the composite signal after the plurality of signals have been combined by the combiner.

35 A feedback path may be arranged between the amplifying means and the predistorting means. Preferably, the predistorting means is arranged to compare the output from the amplifying means from the feedback path with the signals received by the receiving means
40 and to provide, if necessary, at least one new predistortion value to be applied to at least one subsequent signal received

5 by the receiving means. In this way, the predistorting means can adapt to changes in the operating conditions of the amplifier means.

10 Preferably, means are provided in the feedback path for separating the output of the amplifying means into a plurality of different signals. The predistorting means is preferably arranged to compare each of the separated signals with the corresponding signals received from the input means and to determine if the at least one predistortion value needs to be altered.

15 Alternatively, the predistorting means is arranged to compare the composite signal from the amplifying means with a plurality of different signals to provide, if necessary, the at least one new predistortion value.

20 The predistortion means are preferably arranged to provide a plurality of predistortion coefficients, at least one predistortion coefficient being provided for each multi carrier frequency. Different predistortion coefficients are preferably provided for each multi carrier frequency regardless of the way in which the predistortion is achieved in practice.

25 Preferably, the predistortion coefficients for each multicarrier frequency take into account characteristics of other of the said multicarrier frequencies. Those characteristics can include one or more of the following: frequency; and distortion caused by the amplifier means.


30 The amplifier means is preferably a nonlinear amplifier. The predistortion means is preferably arranged to compensate for the nonlinearity of the phase and/or amplitude of the output of the amplifier.

35 A digital to analogue converter may be provided for converting the plurality of signals to analogue form before said signals are

5 amplified by said amplifier means.

The transmitter is preferably incorporated in a base station or alternatively in a mobile station.

10 According to a second aspect of the present invention, there is provided a multi carrier frequency transmission method comprising the steps of receiving a plurality of different digital signals to be transmitted, said different signals to be transmitted on different carrier frequencies; combining said plurality of
15 different signals to provide a composite signal comprising the different signals at the respective carrier frequencies; and amplifying said composite signal, wherein the method further comprises the steps of: predistorting the plurality of different digital signals prior to amplification of the composite signal
20 by the amplification means; and altering the predistortion applied to subsequent signals in dependence on the difference between said different signals and the amplified signal.

 25 For a better understanding of the present invention and as to how the same may be carried into effect, reference will now be made by way of example to the accompanying drawings in which:
Figure 1 shows a typical wireless telecommunications network;
Figure 2a shows the M available frequencies for transmitting to terminals by base stations;
30 Figure 2b shows the structure of a frame;
Figure 3 shows the transmit part of a known base station;
Figure 4 shows the transmit part of a first base station embodying the present invention;
Figure 5 shows the transmit part of a second base station
35 embodying the present invention;
Figure 6 shows the transmit part of a third base station embodying the present invention;
Figure 7 shows a predistorter, which can be used in the first and second embodiments, in more detail;
40 Figure 8 shows a second predistorter, which can be used in the first and second embodiments, in more detail;

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5 Figure 9 shows a third predistorter which can be used in the third embodiments, in more detail; and Figure 10 shows a channelizer.

10 Reference will now be made to Figure 4 which shows a first embodiment of the present invention. In particular, the transmit part 102 of the base station 100 is shown. The base station 100 is in a cellular system of the type shown in Figure 1.

15 The transmit part 102 of the base station 100 comprises N channel encoders 104 where N is the number of different frequencies on which the base station 100 will transmit signals. Each channel encoder 104 receives the data to be transmitted on the particular frequency associated with the given channel encoder 104. The data is placed in a suitable form for transmission. This may include
20 digitising the data, encoding the data, interleaving the data and/or any other step required to be carried out. As mentioned hereinbefore, each channel is on a different frequency after the modulator. The signals output by the channel encoders 104 are in digital form and are at a baseband frequency. Coding,
25 interleaving etc is performed on the digital baseband signals.

The output of each channel encoder 104 is input to a respective digital modulator 106. Each digital modulator 106 also receives two outputs from the adaptive predistorter 108. The first output
30 from the predistorter 108 provides one or more amplitude coefficients which are used to predistort the signal which is output by the digital modulator to compensate for the non linearity of an amplifier 122 with respect to amplitude. The second output from the predistorter 108 provides one or more
35 phase coefficients which are used to predistort the signal which is output by the modulator 106 to compensate for phase distortion provided by the amplifier 122. The amplifier 122 will be described in more detail hereinafter.

40 The digital modulators 106 are arranged to modulate the output of the respective channel encoders 104 according to the modulation method use by the telecommunications system of which

5 the base station 100 forms a part. In the case of the GSM
standard the modulators 106 will perform Gaussian minimum shift
keying (GMSK). In general terms the modulators 106 take the
baseband input from the respective channel encoder 104, pass that
10 input through a shaping filter and mix the signal with a carrier
signal at an intermediate frequency which is higher than the
baseband frequency but less than the frequency at which the
signals are transmitted to thereby provide a modulated output.
The predistortion to compensate for the phase and amplitude
15 distortion introduced by the amplifier 122 can take place at the
same time. The predistortion can be performed during or more
preferably after the modulation has been carried out by the
modulator 106.

20 The output of each of the digital modulators 106 are input to a
signal combiner 11 and to the adaptive predistortor 108. The
combiner 110 combines the outputs of all of the modulators 106
to provide a single output. That output contains the signals for
each of the frequencies. It should be appreciated that the output
of the combiner 110 provides a single stream of digital words
25 which represent the amplitude of the composite signal at each
sampling instant. The output of the combiner 110 is input to a
digital to analogue converter 112 which converts the digital
wideband signal output by the combiner to an analogue signal.

30 The output of the digital to analogue converter 112 is input to
a first bandpass filter 114 which removes signal components
generated by the digital to analogue converter 112 which are
outside the intermediate frequency band. The output of the first
bandpass filter 114 is input to a first mixer 116. The first
35 mixer 116 also receives an input from a first local oscillator
118. The output of the first bandpass filter 114 is thus mixed
by the first mixer 116 with the output of the first local
oscillator 118 to provide an output containing the N signals,
each of which is at the radio frequency at which that signal is
40 to be transmitted. Each of the N signals will thus be at a
different radio frequency. The frequency of the first local

5 oscillator 118 is thus selected to allow the intermediate frequency signals to be upconverted to the required radio frequencies by the first mixer 116.

10 The output of the first mixer 116 is input to a second bandpass filter 120 which removes any signal components introduced by the first mixer 116 which are outside the radio frequency band of the signals to be transmitted.

15 The output of the second bandpass filter 120 is input to the power amplifier 122 which amplifies the received input. The output of the amplifier 122 is input to a third bandpass filter 124 which is arranged to filter out any signal components introduced by the amplifier 122 which fall outside the radio frequency band of the signals to be transmitted. The output of the third bandpass filter 124 is passed to an antenna 126 which transmits the signals to the terminals in the cell associated with the base station.

20 Between the amplifier 122 and the third bandpass filter 124, there is arranged a coupler 128 which is arranged to sample a small part of the signals which are transmitted. In other words, the coupler 128 allows a small proportion of the signals to be transmitted to be sampled. The coupler 128 outputs an analogue sample of the output signal which is typically below the power of the input to the third bandpass filter 124.

25 The output of the coupler 128 is input to a second mixer 132 which receives a signal from a second local oscillator 134. The signals which are received from the coupler 128 are in the radio frequency band. The signal from the second local oscillator 134 is at a frequency such that when the signals from the coupler 128 are mixed with signal from the local oscillator 134, the output of the second mixer 132 consists of the signals which were transmitted but at the intermediate frequencies. The intermediate frequencies output by the second mixer 132 may but not necessarily be the same as the intermediate frequencies input to

5 the first mixer 116. Accordingly, the frequency of the signals provided by the first and second oscillators 118 and 134 may be the same. In that case, a single oscillator may be provided.

10 The output of the second mixer 132 is input to a fourth bandpass filter 136 which filters out any signal components introduced by the second mixer 132 which are outside the intermediate frequency band. The output of the fourth bandpass filter 136 is input to an analogue to digital converter 138 which is arranged to convert the analogue signals to digital form.

15 The digital signals are output by the analogue to digital converter 138 to a channelizer 140. The channelizer 140 divides the signals into the N different frequencies corresponding to the frequencies on which those signals were transmitted. The channelizer 140 is able to distinguish the N signals as they are all at different frequencies. The channelizer 140 provides N outputs, one for each of the frequencies. Each of the N outputs provided by the channelizer 140 are input to the adaptive predistorter 108. The channelizer 140 can be provided in any
20 suitable way including a bank of digital downconverters and fast fourier transform circuitry.

25 The adaptive predistorter 108 thus receives for each channel a version of the signal before it passes through the combiner 110 and subsequent elements of transmit part 102 of the base station 100 (from the respective digital modulator) and a version of the signal after it has passed through the transmit part 102 (from the channelizer 140). The predistorter 108 thus compares like versions of the same signal eg, both signals will be modulated
30 at the same frequencies. The adaptive predistorter 108 is arranged to compare these signals. If the coefficients which the predistorter 108 outputs to the given digital modulator are good then the signal which is transmitted should be the same as the respective signal which is input to the combiner 110. Ideally the
35 only differences should be in scale of the signals. If the signals differ, the predistorter 108 arranged to calculate new
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5 predistortion coefficients which take into account the results of the comparison.

Thus, the predistorter 108 compares for each frequency the signal which was transmitted with the signal output by the respective digital modulator 106. For each frequency it is determined if the current predistortion coefficients are acceptable and if not calculates new coefficients to be used for that channel. Predistortion is thus performed individually for each frequency prior to signal combining. The predistortion coefficients for each frequency are determined based on feedback from the corresponding frequency as transmitted. The predistortion coefficients are arranged to compensate for non-linearity with respect to amplitude and also phase distortion. The phase and amplitude of the signals of the digital modulators 106 are altered in accordance with these coefficients. How these coefficients are used will depend on the modulation method. In the simplest cases, the coefficients could be added to the signal or used as multipliers.

25 A microcontroller 142 is provided which provides control signals to the predistorter 108, the combiner 110, the channelizer 140 and the first and second local oscillators 118 and 134. The microcontroller 142 is arranged to control the frequency of the signals generated by the oscillators 118 and 134.

30 The embodiment of Figure 4 has the advantage that each of the individual channels are input to the adaptive predistorter on the input side and the individual channels are received from a channeliser on the output side. Therefore, the predistortion coefficients that are calculated by the adaptive predistorter are based on all of the carriers. This allows optimal performance to be obtained since all the information is available.

40 The combiner 110 requires information on the frequency if an inverse fast fourier transform combining technique is required. The algorithm performed by the adaptive predistorter 108 may

5 also, as discussed hereinbefore utilise frequency information when calculating the predistortion coefficients.

Reference will now be made to Figure 7 which shows a first predistorter which can be used in the arrangement of Figure 4. The predistorter 108a comprises n subtracters 202 each of which receives a respective one of the outputs from the digital modulators 106. Each subtracter also receives a input from the channeliser 140. Each subtracter 202 receives the output from the modulator 106 corresponding to a given user and the output from the channeliser 140 which also corresponds to that user. The subtracter 202 subtracts one of the outputs from the other to thus determine the difference between those signals. The output of each subtracter 202 thus constitutes a difference signal which is input to an adaption algorithm block 204 which on the basis of the input received from the subtractors 202 calculates, if necessary, new amplitude and phase predistortion coefficients. These amplitude and phase coefficients are output to a look-up table 200 where they are stored. The values from the look-up table 200 are supplied, as shown in Figure 4, to the respective digital modulators 106. The adaption algorithm block 204 may also receive an input from the microcontroller 142 which provides information as to the frequency of the signals. This information can be used by the adaption algorithm block 204 to calculate the amplitude and phase predistortion coefficients.

30 Reference will now be made to Figure 5 which shows a second embodiment of the present invention. The embodiment shown in Figure 5 is similar to the embodiment shown in Figure 4 and accordingly only the differences between the first and second embodiments will be described.

The adaptive predistorter 108 does not, as in the first embodiment, have outputs connected to the digital modulators 106. The output of the combiner 110 is connected to the input of the predistorter 108. The output of the predistorter 108 is connected to the input of the digital to analogue convertor. The

5 predistorter 108 thus predistorts the multicarrier output of the combiner 110 and outputs a predistorted multicarrier signal. The feedback path is the same in the first and second embodiments and accordingly the predistorter 108 operates in a similar manner to that shown in the first embodiment. However, phase correction is not applied and the amplitude correction is the same for all frequencies. This solution is simple but may not provide the required performance in all cases.

15 Reference will now be made to Figure 8 which shows a second predistorter 108b which can be used in the second embodiment shown in Figure 5. This second predistorter 108 comprises n subtractors 208 each of which receives an output from a respective one of the digital modulators. Each subtracter 208 also receives a corresponding input from the channelizer 140 as in the first embodiment. Each subtracter 208 thus receives two modulated signals. The two signals received by each subtracter 208 are subtracted one from the other to generate a difference signal. This output difference signal is input to the adaption algorithm block 204 which is the same as discussed in relation to the first predistorter of Figure 7. As with the first predistorter of Figure 7, the adaption algorithm block 204 also receives an input from the microcontroller 142 with information concerning the frequency. The adaption algorithm block 204 provides amplitude coefficients on its output which are output to the look-up table 200. Unlike the embodiment shown in Figure 7, the look-up table receives the multicarrier signal from the combiner 110 which defines an address in the look-up table. Accordingly, the multicarrier signal is modified in accordance with the amplitude values from the look-up table and output to the digital to analogue convertor 112.

40 Reference is now made to Figure 10 which shows a possible construction of the channeliser 140. The channeliser comprises n blocks 220, with one block provided for each frequency. Each block of the channeliser 220 comprises an input for receiving the output of the analogue to digital converter 138 and a frequency

5 control signal from the microcontroller 142. The output from the
analogue to digital converter 138 is input to first and second
multipliers 222 and 224. The first multiplier 222 produces the
I or in-band, component of the input signal whilst the second
multiplier 224 produces the Q, or quadrature-phase component of
10 the input signal. Each of the multipliers 222 and 224 receives
a frequency from the numerically controlled oscillator 226. The
frequency of the oscillator 226 is controlled by the frequency
control input. The output of the oscillator 226 is connected
directly to one of the multipliers 222 whilst the output for the
15 second multipliers 224 is connected to a phase shifter 228 which
shifts the phase of the output signal from the oscillator 226 by
90°. The phase shifted output signal of the oscillator 226 is
input to the second multipliers 224.

20 The output of each of the first and second multipliers 222 and
224 are connected to filters 230 and 232 which are arranged to
filter out signal components introduced by the respective
multipliers as well as other carriers within the multicarrier
signal.

25 Each element 220 thus provides two outputs, one for the I
component and one for the Q component for each frequency.

30 The frequency information provided by the microcontroller 142 is
used by the predistorter 108 in the third embodiment to
reconstruct the composite signal using any appropriate method.
The methods require frequency information. One example is the
inverse fast fourier transform technique which creates a spectral
representation of the signal sampled in the time domain.

35 Reference will now be made to Figure 6 which shows a third
embodiment of the present invention. As with the second
embodiment of the present invention, only the differences between
the first and third embodiments will be discussed.

40 The channelizer 140 of Figure 4 has been omitted from the

embodiment of Figure 6. The output of the analogue to digital converter 138 is thus connected directly to the input of the predistorter 108. As information is only available on the composite signal, the predistorter is arranged to create a reference.

Reference will now be made to Figure 9 which shows a third embodiment of a predistorter which can be used in the embodiment of Figure 6. The third predistorter 108c receives the outputs from the digital modulators 106. The output of each of the digital modulators 106 is input to a combiner 212 which combines the outputs of the modulators 200 to provide a single signal which is input to a single subtracter 214. The single subtracter 214 also receives the output of the analogue to digital converter 138. The single subtracter 214 provides a difference signal as a result of subtracting one of the outputs from the combiner 212 and the analogue to digital converter 138 from the other. This difference signal is input to an adaption algorithm block 216 which calculates, if necessary new amplitude and phase distortion coefficients. As with the first two predistorters, the adaption algorithm block 216 receives an input from the microcontroller 146 with information concerning the frequency. This information is also input to the combiner 212. The new values are stored in the look-up table 200.

In the previously described embodiments, the output from the digital modulators are input to the adaptive predistorter. In an alternative embodiment, the output of the channel encoders may be output to the adaptive predistorter instead. In those circumstances, the channeliser may need also to demodulate the signals so that the adaptive predistortor compares like with like.

The embodiments which calculate the predistortion coefficients for each carrier can be modified so that the frequency, distortion etc on the other carriers are taken into consideration.

5 In the embodiments where the composite signal is predistorted, the combiner output consists of amplitude words, the correction occurring by adjusting the magnitude of the words. Nonlinearities in the amplifier output could be compensated by correcting the magnitude of the combiner output words with an inverse function.

10 The correction may thus be dependent on the particular combiner output. This might occur by indexing a look-up table with the combiner output word and outputting the respective contents to the digital to analogue converter.

15 In the embodiments of the present invention described hereinbefore, only one set of intermediate frequencies is used. However in alternate embodiments of the present invention, there may be a further stage where the frequencies of the signals at a first set of intermediate frequencies may be upconverted to a second set of intermediate frequencies which are greater than the first set of intermediate frequencies but less than the radio frequency.

20 Whilst the embodiment of the present invention has been described in the context of the GSM standard it should be appreciated that embodiments of the present invention are applicable to any other TDMA system, any system using spread spectrum techniques such as code division multiple access (CDMA), frequency division multiple access (FDMA) or hybrids of any of these methods. For example GSM

25 is an FDMA/TDMA hybrid.

30 It should be appreciated that although the preferred embodiment of the present invention has been described in the context of a base transceiver station, embodiments of the present invention are also applicable to mobile stations and terminals which are arranged to communicate with the base station. Embodiments of the present invention can be used with any suitable transmitter which is sending signals at more than one frequency at the same time in both wireless and wired environments.